

Likhachev became prominent for his defense of Russian culture. He helped preserve many architectural monuments in St. Petersburg, and lobbied the Russian Government to finance a television channel devoted to culture.

However, it was not only the physical destruction of his homeland that concerned Academician Likhachev. He condemned the moral wasteland left by seventy years of communism. "Like other members of the Russian intelligencia," wrote the *New York Times*, "Likhachev was deeply disappointed by the violence, greed and vulgarity that surfaced in Russian society after the fall of communism." Without overcoming the perverted morality created by communist rule, he warned, Russia could fall prey to an irrational demagoguery that could threaten the entire world.

With his love of country, combined with tolerance and reason, I believe Academician Likhachev embodied "Russian nationalism" in the best sense of the word. May his example and his ideas thrive in Russia of the 21st century.

THE FAIRNESS FOR PERMANENT RESIDENTS ACT OF 1999

HON. BILL McCOLLUM

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 4, 1999

Mr. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, in 1996, Congress made several modifications to our country's immigration code that have had a harsh and unintended impact on many people living in the United States. These individuals, permanent resident aliens, have the legal right to reside in this country and apply for U.S. citizenship. They serve in the military, own businesses and make valuable contributions to society.

For example, earlier this summer, my office received a letter from a woman I will call "Amy." Amy, an American citizen, and her husband, "Bob," a permanent resident alien from Scotland, were married in the United States, have two American born children, and lived a productive life in Florida for nearly 20 years. Bob had been a resident of the U.S. since he was 11 years old.

In 1985, Bob was convicted of a crime and served a three year prison term and 10 years of probation. According to the immigration laws in effect at the time, Bob was punished under U.S. law and was expected to have served his debt to society. In 1999, Bob was a rehabilitated, productive and gainfully employed member of his community.

The changes made in the immigration laws in 1996 meant that Bob, who had committed a crime 13 years ago—a crime that was not considered deportable at that time—and served his debt to society, was about to be punished again. The harsh provisions of the 1996 bill dictated that he be automatically deported for the crimes he committed 13 years ago, with no opportunity to seek a waiver from an immigration judge, as he would have before the 1996 law change.

In addition, the law was made retroactive so that an 80-year-old permanent resident alien who committed a comparatively minor crime

60 years ago, had served his or her sentence and been a model resident in this country for more than 50 years, would now be automatically deported—regardless of physical infirmity, family considerations or any other reason.

Amy and Bob were forced to move to Scotland. The cost of the move was staggering to the family and most of their possessions were left in the U.S. Amy had to leave her native country to keep her family together, and their two children were forced to leave friends and family members behind. Amy is now undergoing immigration review in Scotland and Bob continues to work longer hours to support the family. It is uncertain if the family will be allowed to remain with Bob unless he can increase his income and prove he can support his family.

Last week, my colleague LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART and I introduced the Fairness for Permanent Residents Act of 1999. Our proposal is designed to "right" a wrong that was created by the 1996 changes to the immigration law. We must put fairness and justice in place to allow families like Amy and Bob to have their voice heard before they are forced into fleeing the country or being deported. For individuals who commit heinous crimes, the law should not be changed.

The law presently reads that any permanent resident alien convicted of a crime now or in the past that carries a possible sentence of one year or more—regardless of whether he or she was sentenced to or served a single day in jail—will be automatically deported with no chance for a hearing to seek a waiver. Under our bill, the right to a hearing before an immigration judge to seek a waiver from deportation would be restored for permanent resident aliens who commit comparatively minor crimes, expressly excluding murder, rape or other violent or serious crimes from waiver eligibility. Those in this category who have been deported since 1996 would have a right to seek a waiver, which if granted would permit them to return to the U.S.

Also included in our bill is relief for permanent resident aliens who are now being detained indefinitely pending deportation for crimes that have been committed in the past. Current law does not permit them to seek release on bond even if there is no place for them to be deported and they pose no danger to society if released. Our bill would allow the Attorney General to consider release to such individuals, provided they meet certain conditions.

Our bill returns balance to our existing laws by allowing people with compelling or unusual circumstances to argue their cases for reconsideration. The legislation does not automatically waive the deportation order, it simply grants a permanent resident alien the right to have the Attorney General review the merits of his or her case.

The 1996 law went too far, and as the *Miami Herald* recently editorialized, "it hurts more than just the foreign born. Its victims include families with U.S. citizen children, communities that lose businesses, and businesses that lost employees. Most of all it hurts the spirit of a nation that prides itself on its immigrant heritage and just laws."

We are a fair nation and must strike a fair balance in our immigration laws—the Fairness

for Permanent Residents Act would do just that.

HONORING THE BRANFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT AND M.P. RICE HOSE COMPANY 2 ON THEIR 100TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 4, 1999

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today to congratulate the Branford Fire Department and M.P. Rice Hose Company 2 for one hundred years of dedicated service to the residents of Branford, Connecticut. M.P. Rice Hose Company 2 is the only entirely volunteer company which has remained active since the Branford Fire Department was established in 1899.

When it was first established, the Branford Fire Department was composed of citizens volunteering to protect their friends and neighbors from the threat of fire. With two hand drawn hose carriages and a horse drawn ladder truck, three fire fighting companies, Hose Company 1, House Company 2, and the Martin Burke Hook and Ladder company emerged. Today, the M.P. Rice House Company 2 continues in this strong tradition, a full century later, as the only remaining company which is completely comprise of volunteers. Working with career members of the Branford Fire Department, the volunteer companies provide residents with the very best in fire protection. As volunteers, the members of the M.P. Rice Hose company work arm and arm with our professionals, representing a commitment to the community that if taken up more broadly would make for stronger towns across America.

As the Branford community gathers today to celebrate this wonderful achievement, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have dedicated not only their time, but their lives, to the safety of all Branford residents. Firefighters face risks that many of us can never truly comprehend. Each day they must be able to perform under intense pressure—literally in life or death situations. Few things are more important than feeling safe in our homes and workplaces. Whether hosing down flames, rescuing a child from a burning house, or waiting for our call, firefighters are always there to protect us and provide us with the peace of mind we need to sleep at night. I am proud to recognize and commend the tremendous commitment they have made to our community. Our thanks and appreciation can never repay those who put their lives on the line to ensure our safety.

Today's celebration marks the 100th Anniversary of the Branford Fire Department. The courage and dedication demonstrated each day by these men and women, whether volunteer or career member, is reflective of the true spirit in which the department was established. I am indeed proud to rise today to extend my thanks for what you do each day, and congratulations on this remarkable accomplishment.